

RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT



Paul Suttell



William Robinson



Francis Flaherty



Gilbert V. Indeglia



Maureen
McKenna Goldberg

Justices	Paul Suttell	William Robinson	Francis Flaherty	Gilbert V. Indeglia	Maureen McKenna Goldberg
Confidence Score	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Democrat	Mild Republican	Indeterminate
Opinion Partners					
Dissenting Minority					
Determining Majority					
Lone Dissenter					

- ▶ Number of justices: **5**
- ▶ Number of cases: **62**
- ▶ Percentage of cases with a unanimous ruling: **91.9% (57)**
- ▶ Justice most often writing the majority opinion: **Justice Flaherty (15)**
- ▶ Per curiam decisions: **1**
- ▶ Concurring opinions: **1**
- ▶ Justice with most concurring opinions: **Justice Robinson (1)**
- ▶ Dissenting opinions: **5**
- ▶ Justice with most dissenting opinions: **Justice Flaherty and Robinson (2)**

COURT CONTENTION

Opinion partners/lone dissenters

In 2020, no cases before the Rhode Island Supreme Court were decided by split decision.

Determining majority

In 2020, no cases before the Rhode Island Supreme Court were decided by split decision.

Lone dissenter

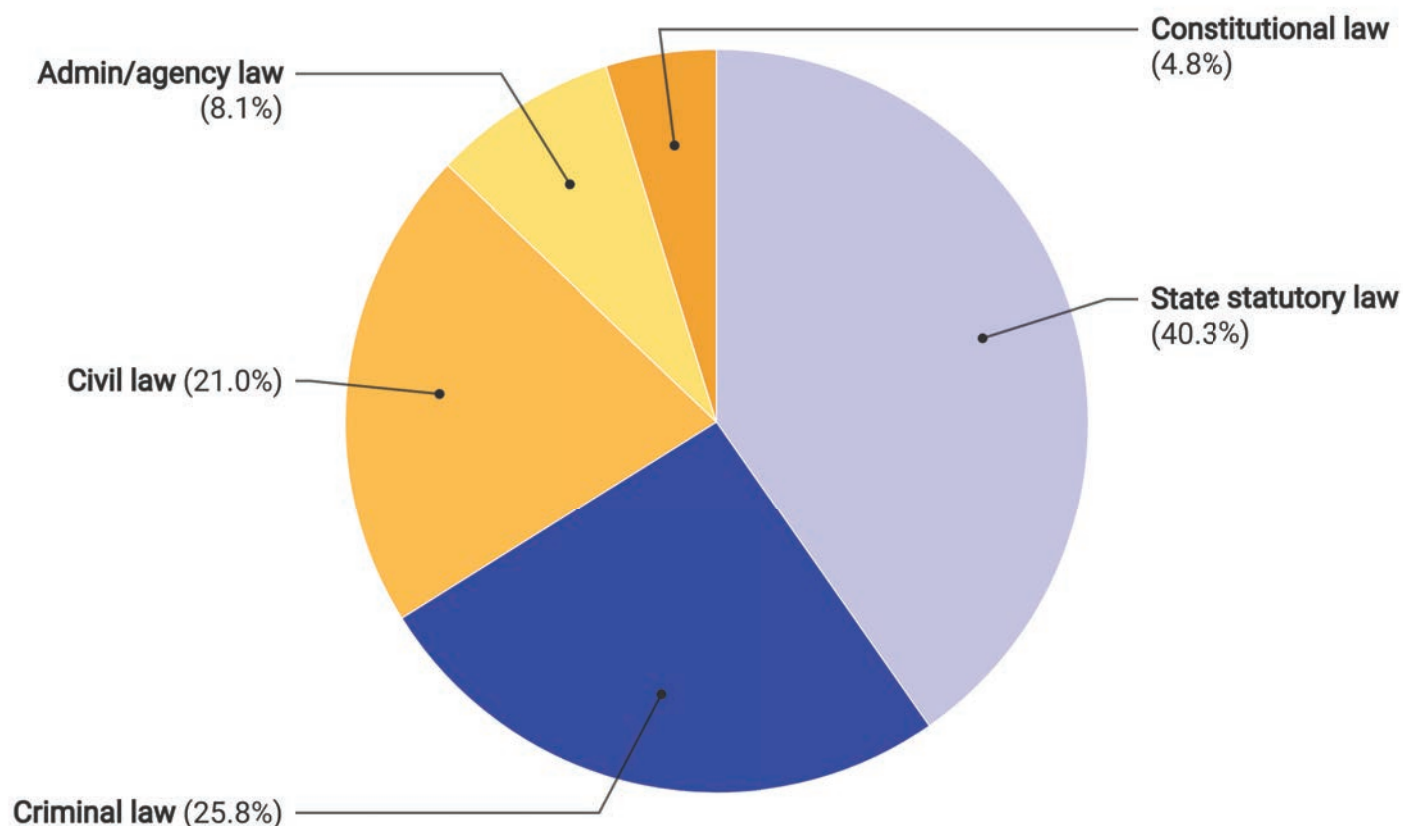
In 2020, three cases before the Rhode Island Supreme Court were decided 4-1. In two additional cases, a justice filed an opinion concurring in part and dissenting in part. Justice Flaherty dissented alone twice. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Justice Flaherty recorded a Mild Democratic Confidence Score.

COURT JURISDICTION

The Rhode Island Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction over legal and constitutional questions. Additionally, the court must regulate admission to the state bar and determine disciplinary issues. The following text from Article X, Section 2 of the Rhode Island Constitution covers the organization and jurisdiction of the court:

“Jurisdiction of Supreme and Inferior Courts -- Quorum of Supreme Court
The supreme court shall have final revisory and appellate jurisdiction upon all questions of law and equity. It shall have power to issue prerogative writs, and shall also have such other jurisdiction as may, from time to time, as prescribed by law. A majority of its judges shall always be necessary to constitute a quorum. The inferior courts shall have such jurisdiction as may, from time to time, be prescribed by law.”

Case types decided by Rhode Island Supreme Court, 2020



The most common cases heard by the Rhode Island Supreme Court in 2020 were state statutory cases. Of the 62 cases it heard, 25 were state statutory law cases, or 40.3 percent of its total caseload for the year. A state statutory case involves the violation or enforcement of a state statute.

The second most common cases that reached the supreme court were criminal law cases. A criminal case involves a final criminal appeal before the court of last resort. The Rhode Island Supreme Court heard 16 criminal law cases in 2020, or 25.8 percent of its total caseload for the year.

The third most common cases that reached the court were civil cases. A civil case is one that involves a dispute between two parties, one of whom seeks reparations or damages. The Rhode Island Supreme Court heard 13 civil law cases in 2020, or 21.0 percent of its total caseload for the year.